Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASUNCI 03455 172151Z

62
ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARA-06 DODE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

NSC-05 INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00 L-01 DHA-02 SP-02 /039 W
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O R 172115Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8102
INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3455

LIMDIS

ARA FOR ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY RYAN AND ARA/ECA FOR MR. ZIMMERMAN

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PA
SUBJECT: TERMINATION OF MILGP IN PARAGUAY

REF: STATE 201994

1. AS INSTRUCTED BY PARA 4 REFTEL, I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES AUGUST 17 TO INFORM HIM OF PENDING TERMINATION OF MILGP. I HANDED HIM COPY OF SECTION 104(C) AND AT HIS REQUEST A LIST OF THE COUNTRIES WHERE MILGPS WILL BE TERMINATED SEPTEMBER 30.

2. AFTER EXPLAINING THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE ACT I TOLD NOGUES THAT MILGP COMMANDER WOULD CALL ON MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES ON FOLLOWING DAY TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF PHASE DOWN. I ASSURED HIM THAT REMAINING NUCLEUS OF THREE SENIOR OFFICERS WOULD BE FULLY CAPABLE TO HANDLE FMS SALES AND MAP TRAINING ASPECTS. I STRESSED PARTICULARLY THAT WITH THE TERMINATION OF MAP GRANTS BY SEPTEMBER 1977 THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER NEED FOR ADDITIONAL LARGE MILGP STAFF.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ASUNCI 03455 172151Z

3. NOGUES THANKED ME FOR HAVING INFORMED HIM PRIOR TO NOTIFICATION

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD CONGRESSIONAL ACTION BUT THOUGHT THAT SHORT LEAD TIME WAS DISCOURTEOUS ON THE PART OF THE USG. HE SAID HE COULD EXPLAIN OUR ACTIONS TO THE PRESIDENT BUT THAT THE LATTER WOULD TAKE SERIOUS OFFENSE WHEN NOTING THAT BOLIVIA, PARAGUAY'S ARCHRIVAL WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP ITS MILGP. HE SAID HE KNEW THAT THE USG DID NOT TAKE SERIOUSLY PARAGUAY'S PREOCCUPATION ABOUT BUILD-UP OF BOLIVIAN FORCES AND THAT WE CONSIDERED IT "NERVOUSNESS" OR "OBSESSION." HE WANTED TO ASSURE ME THAT THE THREAT WAS REAL AND THAT OUR DECISION TO TERMINATE MILGP HERE AHEAD OF BOLIVIA WAS A BAD BLOW. HE SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY SURPRISED BY THE INSENSITIVITY OF GENERAL MCAULIFFE WHO WAS THE LAST HIGH RANKING OFFICER TO WHOM GENERAL STROESSNER SPOKE ABOUT HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH BOLIVIA. NOGUES INSISTED THAT THE USG HAD NOT DONE RIGHT IN NOT GIVING EQUAL TREATMENT TO BOTH COUNTRIES. MY REPLY THAT A STRONG BOLIVIA IS AS MUCH IN PARAGUAY'S INTEREST AS IN OUR'S DID NOT ASSUAGE HIM AS THE PARAUGYANS ARE DEEPLY CONVINCED THAT U.S. WEAPONS GIVEN TO BOLIVIA WILL ULTIMATELY BE USED AGAINST PARAGUAY. FINALLY, HE ASKED ME FOR A LIST OF THE 34 COUNTIRES WHERE MILGPS WILL BE MAINTAINED DURING FY77.

4. COMMENT: NOGUES, WHO IS A MOST REASONABLE MAN, IN MY VIEW WAS ONLY GIVING ME A TASTE OF WHAT HE THINKS I WILL HEAR FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE PARAGUAYAN MILITARY WHO ARE TOTALLY UNREASONABLE ON THE SUBJECT OF BOLIVIA. I REPORTED REPEATEDLY ON PARAGUAY'S CONCERN OVER BOLIVIA DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT HAS RAISED THE "BOLIVIAN THREAT" WITH EVERY U.S. VISITOR REGARDLESS OF THE OCCASION. HE WILL BE VERY UNHAPPY AND I AM CERTAIN THE MILGP COMMANDER AND I WILL HEAR PLENTY MORE ABOUT IT.

5. I WOULD PREFER NOT REPEAT NOT TO GIVE ANY WRITTEN FORMAL NOTIFICATION UNTIL WE COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF INFORMING KEY GOP LEADERS. I HOPE THAT BY PATIENTLY EXPLAINING THE INTENT OF THE ACT WE CAN MINIMIZE ITS ADVERSE IMPACT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE SEND ASAP REQUESTED LIST OF COUNTRIES WHERE MILGPS WILL BE MAINTAINED DURING FY77.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
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